

Hendon to gamble?

WYCOMBE WANDERERS stage what must be their most important Rothmans Isthmian League match of the season tonight (Tuesday) when they take on the champions Hendon at Loakes Park. Victory for Wycombe would put them 12 points ahead of their opponents and in a strong position to hold off the ever-present challenge of Bishop's Stortford.

At present Wanderers are sitting on top of the league with a total of 80 points. Hendon are third with 71 points but have three games in hand — a possible nine points which would put them level with the Blues. Stortford are fourth with 68 points but have four games in hand. They also have the best goal average of the three with Hendon close behind them and Wycombe third.

Tonight's match, then, will play a leading role in the championship battle and could even decide it. The form of both sides recently has been extremely interesting.

Hendon, at one time looking odds on to retain their title, have slipped recently. With Wycombe fans watching anxiously for their every result, the Claremont Road men dropped six points with draws against Tooting, St. Albans and Hayes and recently lost for only the third time this term, 1-2 at Dulwich.

There is a good chance they will gamble on the fitness of striker and target man Keiron Somers for this vital match. Somers has been troubled by a back injury since Hendon's epic 1-1 draw at Newcastle in the F.A. Cup. In all, he has missed about a dozen games through the injury and was only substitute last week.

When three Hendon players

— Tony Jennings, Phil Fry and Derek Baker switched to Enfield this term, Hendon were forced to re-shuffle the team. Reserve Dave Poole has taken over at right back while John Wilson re-joined the club after spells with Hitchin and Bishop's Stortford. Micky Cooper, who spent the best part of last season up at Loakes Park as full back, is now playing in midfield.

Cooper, however, may stand down for Bobby Childs, who missed Saturday's Cup tie. Childs, who has proved a real handful for Wycombe over the years, scored Hendon's first goal at Claremont Road this season when the Blues went down 1-2. Tony Horseman equalised before Baker produced a tremendous winner from 20 yards, going in off the crossbar.

Wanderers have only one injury worry. Phil Wood, who started Saturday's match in midfield before being replaced by Steve Perrin, has a bruised instep. Manager Brian Lee is unlikely to make any drastic changes from the side that pipped Ilford.

ON Thursday, the Blues resume their Premier Midweek Floodlight League programme with a visit to Wokingham Town. Top of the table at present, three points would put Wycombe in commanding position to take the section.